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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between the evaluation (for both behavior and academic work) and authority systems of public high schools and the extent to which students in those schools become disengaged. Student disengagement is reflected in student absenteeism, low-level student participation in school, and student participation in negative activities in school. The theory of evaluation and authority developed by Sanford Dornbusch and W. R. Scott is used to identify problems in the evaluation system for high school students and to examine their impact on student disengagement. Detailed interviews were conducted with 65 high school students from two suburban mid-western high schools. Students were asked to respond to questions about the impact of the school's evaluation system on them personally and then to report on the extent to which they declined to participate or participated at low levels in the school program and the extent to which they participated in negative activities in school. The interviews revealed an association between the problems in the school evaluation system and student disengagement from school. These results help explain those from earlier studies and suggest changes in school policies that could reduce student disengagement. (Author/MLF)

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Secondary School Evaluation Systems and Student Disengagement

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Secondary School Evaluation Systems and Student Disengagement

Student Disengagement

In this paper we examine the relationship between the evaluation and authority systems of public high schools and the extent to which students in those schools become disengaged. A major problem facing educators as we enter the 1980's is the growing number of students who choose not to participate in the mainstream of school activity. These students have resigned themselves to functioning only on the fringes of school life. More specifically, in this study we focus on what we have termed "student disengagement". We argue that "engagement" exists when students are participating in the activities offered as part of the school program. We divide school activities into three types: those activities associated with academic work where the focus is on the student as a scholar; those associated with the smooth running of the school as a community where the focus is on the student as a good citizen; and those associated with what has traditionally been called the extracurriculum where the focus is on the student in the performance of some more specialized role such as athlete, leader, dramatic performer, etc. Disengagement occurs when student active engagement is low. Thus for the purposes of this study we define student disengagement as follows:

> Student Disengagement: The extent to which students refrain from participating in the activities offered as part of the school program, activities associated with the common roles of scholar and citizen, and the more specialized roles inherent in extracurricular activities.

Student disengagement appears in the form of three pressing problems for American high schools -- student absenteeism, low level student participation in school, and student participation in negative activities

in school. Each of these problems seriously interferes with attempts to educate American youth.

Student absenteeism, for example, is a national phenomenon that touches all ethnic groups, economic classes, and geographic regions. In 1965, 12% of the 517 high school principals in the Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey reported average attendance figures of 90% or less. In a reply to a similar question on a 1970 survey, 36% of the principals reported average attendance figures of 89% or below (Meyer, Chase-Dunn, and Invarity, 1971). At least two million students regularly cut school without an excuse (Newsweek, 1979). As a result of the growing rate of absenteeism in many high schools (Birman and Natriello, 1980), it is seen by school administrators as their major discipline problem (Wright, 1978; Duke, 1978; Meyer, Chase-Dunn, and Invarity, 1971). Even in suburban high schools absence from school is a cause of great concern (Time, 1977).

Growing public concern regarding this isssue has emerged within the context of what many see as the high school's failure to provide many students with even the most rudimentary skills to face the responsibilities of adulthood. This failure has been at the root of minimum competency testing programs which have been initiated in more than 40 states. In addition, high rates of absenteeism have been cited as one cause of the persistent decline in SAT scores (Wirtz, 1977) as well as being linked to school violence and vandalism. For instance, Rubel (1977) found that students who are involved in delinquent behavior are those most likely to be frequently absent from school.

More subtle, and less well understood than the problem of student absenteeism is the problem of low-level student participation in school. deCharms and his colleagues (1976) have demonstrated that student motivation is much lower than it need be in schools. Dornbusch (1974)

found that student effort in school can be a central variable in explaining student performance, that is, the extent to which students try in school has a substantial impact on their level of success. Harris, Natriello, and Dornbusch (1980) developed a social influence model and an articulation model to explain the levels of effort put forth by high school students. The social influence model examined the impact of significant others on student effort, while the articulation model examined the impact of the perceived relevance of school work to future careers on student effort. Farman, Natriello, and Dornbusch (1978) discussed the problems with the relationship between relevance and motivation in the case of student effort in high school social studies. Although there are few studies of student effort in school, those that have been done suggest that the problem of low-level student participation is widespread. For example, in the study reported by Massey, Scott, and Dornbusch (1975) fewer than 45% of the White students in the study reported a high level of effort in school, and White students reported higher levels of effort than Black or Spanish Surname students. Further research needs to be done on the problem of low-level student effort, but existing research demonstrates that it is not a rare phenomenon.

The most visible aspect of student disengagement is the problem of student participation in negative activities, typically referred to as delinquency or violence and vandalism in school. In recent years, educators, legislators, and the American public have become increasingly concerned with the high levels of crime and delinquency associated with students in U.S. public schools. Associations of professional educators have issued statements of concern about the problem. (See the statements collected in the 1977 volumne by McPartland and McDill.) Senator Bayh's

Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency has conducted extensive hearings on the matter (Bayh, 1975). Public opinion as evidenced in a series of polls (Elam, 1973; Gallup, 1974,1975; Harris, 1969), has reflected a growing public concern with negative student behavior.

The problem, first noted amidst the student disruptions of the sixties, has been most clearly documented in the nationwide studies by the National Institute of Education. The NIE Safe School Study (National Institute of Education, 1978) found that:

> Twenty-two percent of all secondary students reported avoiding restrooms at school because of fear.
>
> Sixteen percent reported avoiding three or more places at school for the same reason.
>
> Three percent reported that they are afraid most of the time, representing around 600,000 secondary students.
>
> Four percent, or around 800,000 stayed home from school in the previous month because they were afraid.
>
> Twelve percent of the secondary school teachers, representing some 120,000, said they were threatened with injury by students at school.
>
> Twelve percent of the teachers said they hesitated to confront misbehaving students because of fear.
>
> Almost half (48%) of the teachers reported that some students had insulted them or made obscene gestures at them in the last month.

The authors concluded that: "The statistics on incidence, frequency, and seriousness of the problems are sufficiently compelling to make clear the dimensions of the problem and the need for concerted action to remedy it." Although there is some evidence that school violence is leveling off, overall incidence remains high (Crime Control Digest, 1978)

In summary, student disengagement from school manifests itself in three ways: through student absenteeism, through low-level student

participation, and through student participation in negative activities. Each of these represents a major problem for U.S. public schools. We believe that each can be better understood by studying the more general phenomenon of student disengagement.

Evaluation Processes in Secondary Schools

Researchers have identified a number of factors that seem to be associated with the student problems we have subsumed under the rubric of disengagement. For example, some investigators have examined the impact of student origins including such factors as "damaged personalities" on the tendency of students to engage in acts of violence and vandalism in schools (McPartland and McDill, 1977). Other researchers have focused on the role of school policies and procedures such as arrangements for the tracking of students (Polk and Schafer, 1972) or the school's responsiveness to student behavior (McPartland and McDill, 1977). The school environment, including the adolescent peer group, has been a chief concern of a number of studies (Coleman, 1961) as has the effects of the school context (Davis, 1966; St. John, 1971). The community environment has also been examined for its impact on student disengagement (National Institute of Education, 1978). Finally, at least several studies have focused on the effects of the anticipated futures of students in explaining disengagement (Stinchcomb, 1964).

Our point in reviewing some of the approaches to studying the variables likely to affect student disengagement from school is to acknowledge that our own approach has been to concentrate on one rather narrow but important feature of the organization of secondary schools in attempting to understand the antecedents of disengagement. Specifically,

we focus on the processes by which student performance is evaluated in schools. Spady (1974) has pointed to the importance of the institutional arrangements of schools and in particular the perceived illegitimacy of the evaluation and reward structure of the school in any explanation of student disruption. For example, he cites the "premium placed on the student's ability either to achieve fixed standards of performance under time constraints or to meet and surpass standards determined by the performance level of others" as aspects of the illegitimacy of the school evaluation system. Referring to Merton's (1957) analysis of the ways in which individuals adapt to alienation from a given social structure, Spady notes that students in such situations in schools may respond with rebellion, protest, apathy, or withdrawal. Evidence in support of his interpretation comes from the Safe School Study. Analysis of the data from a national sample of schools revealed that both the extent to which school personnel devote their efforts to governing students and enforcing school rules and regulations and the degree of fairness in school rules and in the administration of the rules are negatively related to the level of violence in the school (National Institute of Education, 1978).

Because we think that evaluation processes are pervasive in school settings and because we believe that such processes are central to understanding the engagement of students in schools, we concentrate our attention on the evaluation and authority systems to which students are subjected. To guide our inquiry, we have relied upon the theory of evaluation and authority developed by S.M. Dornbusch and W.R. Scott through over fifteen years of field research in diverse organizations.

Dornbusch and Scott (1975) argue that not only may the evaluation and authority systems of organizations vary so that membership in one

organization may be more stable than membership in another, but also that individual perceptions of organizational evaluation and authority systems may vary so that certain individuals in certain positions in a single organization may view the same system as more proper than other individuals in other positions. The theory of evaluation and the exercise of authority has certain conceptual advantages over other theories of the responses of members to organizations, for example that developed by Hirschman (1970), because it directs our attention to specific aspects of authority relations within organizations as opposed to general conceptions of organizational or product quality and because it treats organizations as collections of independent tasks rather than as whole units performing uniform tasks. It thus offers a more sensitive view of organizations and their members and puts us in a better position to draw implications for policy.

Dornbusch and Scott's theory of evaluation and the exercise of authority provides us with a way to relate what we have defined as student disengagement to the organizational authority system. Dornbusch and Scott discuss the stability of such authority systems and define system instability as follows:

> Instability - An authority system is unstable to the extent that it contains internal pressures for change.

Utilizing the concept of acceptance level, they link authority system instability to authority system incompatibility:

> Acceptance Level - The minimum level of a performance evaluation that is satisfactory to the performer.
>
> Incompatibility - An authority system exhibits incompatibility to the extent that it prevents performers from maintaining evaluations of their performance at or above their acceptance level.

They argue that authority systems are more unstable to the extent that

they are more incompatible and define four types of incompatibilities. Thus authority systems are more incompatible and hence more unstable to the extent that:

> .... performers are placed in a situation in which the receipt of one performance evaluation at or above acceptance level necessarily entails receiving another evaluation below acceptance level. (Type I Incompatibility - contradictory evaluations)
>
> .... performers receive evaluations below acceptance level for performances or outcomes they do not control. (Type II Incompatibility - uncontrollable evaluations)
>
> .... performers receive evaluations below acceptance level because they are unable to predict accurately the relationship between attributes of their performances and the level of evaluations they receive. (Type III Incompatibility - unpredictable evaluations)
>
> .... the standards used to evaluate performers are so high that they cannot achieve evaluations at or above acceptance level. (Type IV Incompatibility - unattainable evaluations)

We expect to find examples of all four incompatibilities in U.S. high schools. For example, contradictory evaluations exist when student performance is evaluated on the basis of conflicting properties such as speed and accuracy—what Spady cites as the ability to achieve under time constraints. A condition of uncontrollable evaluations may prevail in schools since the tasks assigned to students often do not have associated with them clear techniques for successful completion. Thus a student may apply effort to a task without affecting its outcome successfully and so may see little connection between his effort and organizational evaluations of his performance. A condition of unpredictable evaluations may exist if students fail to understand the criteria by which they are to be judged. Since schools cannot guarantee that these criteria are always clearly communicated by the teachers, understanding criteria for performance evaluation becomes the responsibility of the student, and we speak of good students as those who can give the teacher

what he or she wants (i.e., those who can "read" the teacher) regardless of the teacher's ability to clearly present such criteria. Finally, unattainable evaluations exist whenever students face what for them are inappropriately high standards for performance, standards they cannot meet. To the extent that any of these conditions exists, we would expect the authority system of the school to be unstable and student disengagement to result.

Dornbusch and Scott argue that authority system instability can be manifest in three ways in the behavior of organizational members. These member responses correspond to our delineation of the three problems associated with student disengagement--student non-participation in school, low-level student participation in school, and student participation in negative activities in school. Dornbusch and Scott note that individuals may simply withdraw from the organization. In the case of students, this would take the form of absenteeism or dropping out. Individuals experiencing unstable authority systems may also lower their acceptance level, i.e. they will be satisfied receiving lower performance evaluations. Thus students may decide that they are content to receive "B's" in their classes even though their supervisors might prefer that they strive for "A's". They may adjust their effort accordingly. Finally, individuals may respond to instability in an authority system by a) communicating dissatisfaction with the system to others in the organization; b) suggesting changes in the system to others in the organization; and c) failing to comply with the exercise of an authority right by an organizational superior. Student complaints, suggestions for changing the school, insubordination and disruption are responses to the instability of school evaluation and authority systems. Thus the theory developed by Dornbusch and Scott provides us with a well articulated model of the possible relationship

between problems in the evaluation and authority systems of schools and the problem of student disengagement.

Design of the Study

To test our notions of the relationship between school evaluation systems and student disengagement, we conducted detailed interviews with 65 high school students from two suburban mid-western high schools. Both schools are in the same school school district and both serve predominantly middle-class white communities. The district and its schools are generally regarded as among the best public schools in a major metropolitan area.

Since we were dealing with a relatively small number of students in this study, students were selected by administrators at each of the two schools to represent a range of engagement levels. The interviews lasted approximately an hour, and students were able to provide both fixed choice and open-ended responses. Students were asked to respond to questions about the impact of the school's evaluation system on them personally and then to report on the extent to which they declined to participate or participated at low levels in the school program and the extent to which they participated in negative activities in school. Questions were asked about the evaluation of academic performance, social behavior, and extracurricular activities in the school in general, as well as about the evaluation of student performance and behavior in particular classes and activities. In this paper we report only on the results of the questions regarding academic performance and social behavior in classes.

Students responded easily to our questions and often offered examples of the particular instance of incompatibility suggested in the questions. For example, in response to a question regarding the assignment

of so many things that it isn't possible to do a good job and complete them all, one student commented that "Sometimes you can get a lot of homework from all teachers." Another student, in response to a question asking about a situation where students are evaluated by more than one person and in order to please one person they have to displease the other, pointed to such a conflict involving the expectations of classroom teachers and administrators monitoring hall traffic by noting that "Classes sometimes are in two ends of the building. You have to run to be on time, but running is against the rules." Most of the students seemed to know of the type of problems we were investigating. Brief phrases describing the instances of incompatibilities used in the interview schedule appear in the left columns of Tables 1 and 2. Phrases describing the items used as indicators of disengagement appear in the left columns of Tables 3 and 4.

Results

In Table 1 we present the proportions of students reporting that they are subject to the eight instances of incompatibilities at least fairly often in school.

(Insert Table 1 About Here)

For each instance of incompatibility, over one-tenth of the students reported that it happened to them at least fairly often. Over half of the students reported that they were fairly often the recipients of so many assignments that they couldn't complete them all and do a good job, and over half reported that they were fairly often evaluated on performances on academic work that they felt were atypical for them.

In five out of eight instances, more students reported incompatibilities in the evaluations of their academic work than in the evaluations of their behavior. More students reported incompatibilities for the evaluation of

their behavior in the case of being evaluated by more than one evaluator and facing a conflict between evaluators and in the case of being evaluated on something they had nothing to do with. In the case of being in a group and receiving poor evaluations because others in the group are not performing well, over 40% of the students reported that this occurred at least fairly often for both evaluations of academic work and evaluations of their social behavior. This was the problem most often reported by students for the evaluation of their social behavior.

In Table 2 we present the proportions of students reporting that they are subject to incompatibilities in the evaluation of their academic work and social behavior in their first period class. Since we didn't ask the parallel questions for academic work and social behavior in all cases, we have comparisons between the incompatibilities in the evaluation of academic work and those in the evaluation of behavior in only four out of ten instances shown in Table 2. In 3 of these four, more students report incompatibilities in the evaluation of academic work than in the evaluation of behavior.

In contrast to Table 1, the proportions of students reporting that they are subject to incompatibilities in the evaluation of academic work and social behavior in Table 2 are markedly lower.

(Insert Table 2 About Here)

This is because the questions on which Table 1 is based asked students to report on the extent to which they experienced incompatibilities in the evaluation of their academic work and social behavior in school in general, while the questions on which Table 2 is based asked them to report on the extent to which they experienced these incompatibilities in one of their classes. Thus the higher proportions in Table 1 reflect

not only some culmulative effects of incompatibilities over all the classes in which students are involved, but they also reflect the incompatibilities that arise when individuals are subjected to multiple supervisors who may not communicate with each other and coordinate the assignment of tasks and the assessment of task performances. For example, over half of the students report that in general they are assigned to many things to do in academic work so that they can't do a good job and complete them all, while slightly more than one-tenth of the students reported that such was the case for their first period class.

Nonetheless, at least one-tenth of the students reported incompatibilites in the evaluation of their academic work in first period in each of the eight instances. For evaluations of social behavior, fewer than one-tenth of the students reported incompatibilities in four of the six instances. Only in the case of working in groups and in the case of not understanding what the teacher expected did more than one-tenth of the students report being subjected to incompatibilities at least fairly often.

In Table 3 we present data on the relation of the presence of incompatibility in the evaluation systems for academic work and social behavior to six measures of student disengagement. The measures of student disengagement are described in phrases in the left column of the table and are grouped according to whether they are indicators of student absence or withdrawal from school, low-level student effort in school, or student participation in negative activities in school.

Our measure of the presence of incompatibility in section A of Table 3 was computed by examining student responses to all eight instances of incompatibility in the evaluation of academic work. Students who reported at least one instance where they were usually subjected to any one incompatibility were treated as being subjected to incompatible evaluation

and authority systems. Students who did not report at least one instance where they were usually subjected to any one incompatibility were treated as having compatible evaluation and authority systems. In section B of Table 3, our measure of the presence of incompatibility in evaluation systems was computed in the same way, this time using the six instances of incompatibility in the evaluation of social behavior. Students who reported at least one stance where they were usually subjected to an incompatibility were treated as having incompatible evaluation and authority systems.

As Table 3 reveals, the gammas for the relationships between our measure of the presence of incompatibility in the evaluation systems for academic work and social behavior and our measures of student disengagement are all positive. Students who report that they are subjected to incompatible authority systems are more likely to report also being disengaged than are students who report being subjected to compatible authority systems. Two of our measures of disengagement in the form of negative activities were less useful than we had hoped they might be since so few students reported engaging in these negative behaviors in the schools in our study. Thus the questions regarding damaging school property and stealing at school evoked very few affirmative responses. The less severe negative activity of cheating on a test evoked more affirmative responses and allowed us to treat the positive gammas with more confidence.

The two measures relating to absence from school, unexcused absences and skipping school if you knew you could get away with it, were both positively related to our measure of the presence of incompatibility. However, many fewer students answered affirmatively to the actual report on behavior in the form of unexecused absences than answered affirmatively

to the less behaviorally based question about skipping if you could get away with it. The two measures together seem to indicate that incompatibilities in the evaluation and authority system are associated with withdrawal from school.

Our single measure of disengagement in the form of low student effort, being satisfied with a less than optimum grade, was also positively related to incompatibilities in the authority system. In general, students seem to work for lower grades when they perceive the evaluation system as containing incompatibilities.

In Table 4 we present the relations of the presence of incompatibility in the evaluation systems for academic work and social behavior to six measures of disengagement in first period classes. Our measures of disengagement differed slightly from those used for the more general questions, and once again they appear in the left column. In section A of Table 4 our measure of the presence of incompatibility in the evaluation system for academic work was computed by examining student responses to all eight instances of incompatibility. Students who reported at least one instance where they were fairly often subjected to an incompatibility were treated as being subjected to incompatible evaluation and authority systems. Students who did not report at least one instance where they were fairly often subjected to an incompatibility were treated as having compatible evaluation and authority systems. In section B of Table 4 our measure of the presence of incompatibility in evaluation systems for behavior was computed in the same way, this time using the six instances of incompatibility in the evaluation of social behavior. Students who reported at least one instance where they were

fairly often subjected to an incompatibility were treated as having incompatible evaluation and authority systems.

With the exception of one measure of student disengagement, the relations between the presence of incompatibilities in the evaluation systems and student disengagement were all positive. In the case of the exception, student disengagement as indicated by cutting class, the gamma for the relationship was .00 with students reporting incompatible evaluation systems no more likely than those reporting compatible authority systems to cut class. Incompatibilities in the evaluation system for academic work thus appear not to be associated with the tendency to cut class. The same measure of disengagement does, however, seem to be associated with incompatibilities in the evaluation system for social behavior. Section B of Table 4 shows that the gamma for the relationship between the presence of incompatibilities in the evaluation system for social behavior in first period class and the likelihood of students cutting first period class is .48. Students experiencing incompatibilities in the evaluation system for social behavior are thus more likely to cut class than those who do not report experiencing such incompatibilities.

Our three measures of low student effort are each positively related to student reports of the presence of incompatibility in the evaluation and authority system. Students who report incompatibilities in the evaluation and authority system in first period class are more likely to show less effort in first period class than students who do not report incompatibilities in the evaluation and authority system. The relationship is particularly strong in regard to the tendency of students to be willing to settle for less than an optimum grade in a class. Only one out of seven students who report compatible evaluation systems report that they

are also willing to settle for less than an optimum grade in first period, while seven out of ten students reporting incompatibilities in the evaluation system report that they are willing to settle for less than an optimum grade.

Our measures of student participation in negative activities are also positively related to student reports of the presence of incompatibilities in the authority system. Students reporting the presence of incompatibilities in the evaluation and authority system in first period class are more likely to report disturbing other students and to report disturbing the teacher and disrupting the class during first period. Thus overall, for first period class, 11 out of 12 times we found a positive relationship between the presence of incompatibilities in the evaluation and authority systems and student disengagement.

Discussion

Our analysis indicates that students in high school do indeed experience the types of incompatibilities in evaluation systems identified by Dornbusch and Scott. Furthermore, these incompatibilities seem to be related to disengagement from school as reported by the students. Those students who report the presence of incompatibilities in the evaluation system also report that they are more likely to withdraw from the school organization, put forth low effort in school, and participate in negative activities in school.

Students in the study seemed to experience evaluation and authority in high school not as a single system, but rather as multiple systems, each dependent upon the immediate supervisor. Thus the students were able to describe both general perceptions of the incompatibilities in the evaluation of their performance in school as well as more specific perceptions of the incompatibilities in the evaluation of their performance

in their first period class. It may be both the culmulative effects of the incompatibilities experienced by students in each class as well as the incompatibilities that are likely to arise when performance is supervised by multiple supervisors who seldom communicate that produce the higher levels of incompatibilities in responses to the more general questions.

Students also seem able to distinguish between the evaluation of their performance in terms of academic work and their performance in terms of social behavior in reporting the levels of incompatibilities in the evaluation systems for each. In general more students report incompatibilities in the evaluation system for their academic work than report incompatibilities in the evaluation system for their social behavior. This finding is consistent with the argument made by Dornbusch and Scott (1975) that the evaluation of performance on active tasks, i.e. those tasks lower in clarity, predictability, and efficacy, is more likely to entail incompatibilities than the evaluation of performance on inert tasks, i.e. those high in clarity, predictability, and efficacy. In their terms academic work is an active task, while behavior is an inert task.

Although we found generally positive relationships between reported incompatibility and our measures of student disengagement, some of our measures of disengagement merit further scrutiny. For example, damaging school property and stealing at school were infrequently considered as possible behaviors by the students at the two middle-class suburban high schools in our study. They might be more likely student behaviors in other settings, but they might not be related to incompatibilities in the evaluation system. Our measures of student withdrawal or absence from school might also be re-examined. Unexcused absence from school appears related to incompatibilities in the evaluation system, but this measure may not be related when absence is more chronic than was generally the case

in the schools in our study. Cutting class was related to the incompatibilities in the evaluation system for behavior but not to incompatibilities in the evaluation system for academic work. Students who experience incompatibilities in the evaluation of academic work may be able to remain in class and simply put forth lower effort, while those experiencing incompatibilities in the evaluation of more visible social behavior may find it necessary to avoid the class entirely.

The positive relationships between the presence of incompatibilities and the measures of low student effort in schools may be useful in helping to address what may be the least visible and most pervasive of the three types of student disengagement. Students who report the presence of incompatibilities in the evaluation system show a strong tendency to put forth less effort on school tasks. The evaluation of academic work may pose particularly difficult problems for school organizations and for the students whose work is evaluated in those organizations. In any case, the present study suggests that problems in the evaluation of student performance in school do indeed merit further study.

Tables

Table 1 - Proportions of Students Reporting Incompatibilities in the Evaluation System for the Evaluation of their Academic Work and Behavior

Types of Incompatibilies and Specific Instances	Academic Work: Occurs at Least Fairly Often*	Social Behavior: Occurs at Least Fairly Often*
I. Contradictory Evaluations		
Assigned So Many Things that You Can't Do a Good Job and Complete Them All	.57	.16
Evaluated by More than One Evaluator and to Please One You Must Displease the Other	.28	.32
II. Uncontrollable Evaluations		
Evaluated on Something You Had Nothing to Do With	.11	.23
Working in a Group and Doing Well But Others are not and So You Receive Poor Evaluations	.43	.43
Evaluated on a Performance That is Atypical for You	.51	.29
III. Unpredictable Evaluations		
Don't Know How You Are Expected To Perform	.23	.20
You Receive the Wrong Information on the Way Your Performance is Going to be Evaluated	.19	.11
IV. Unattainable Evaluations		
Standards Used to Evaluate You are Much Too High	.31	.19

*Students were asked to report how frequently each of these incompatibilities happened to them so that they received evaluations low enough to make them dissatisfied. Possible answers were: Always, Usually, Fairly Often, Seldom, and Never.

Table 2 - Proportions of Students Reporting Incompatibilities in the Evaluation System for the Evaluation of their Academic Work and Behavior in First Period Class

Types of Incompatibilities and Specific Instances	Academic Work: Occurs at Least Fairly Often*	Social Behavior: Occurs at Least Fairly Often*
I. Contradictory Evaluations		
Assigned So Many Things that You Can't Do a Good Job and Complete Them All	.13	No Question Asked
Asked to Do Something in a Limited Amount of Time	.19	No Question Asked
II. Uncontrollable Evaluations		
Working in a Group and Doing Well But Others are Not and So You Receive Poor Evaluations	.11	.20
Evaluated on a Performance that is Atypical for You	No Question Asked	.08
III. Unpredictable Evaluations		
Don't Know that An Assignment Has Been Made	.19	No Question Asked
Don't Understand What the Teacher Expects	.16	.11
Don't Understand What the Teacher Considers Good Conduct	No Question Asked	.08
Tests Don't Measure the Things You Have Learned	.33	No Question Asked
IV. Unattainable Evaluations		
Standards Used to Evaluate You Are Much Too High	.19	.06
You Try Hard But Still Don't Do as Well as You Would Like	.25	.05

*Students were asked to report how frequently each of these incompatibilities happened to them so that they received evaluations low enough to make them dissatisfied in their first period class. Possible answers were: Always, Usually, Fairly Often, Seldom, and Never.

Table 3 - Relation of Presence of Incompatibility in the Evaluation System for Academic Work and Behavior to Six Measures of Disengagement

A. Academic Work Measures of Disengagement	Gamma	Proportion of Incompatible Systems Showing Disengagement	Proportion of Compatible Systems Showing Disengagement
I. Absence from School			
Having Unexcused Absences in the Last Four Weeks	.25	.23	.15
Skipping School If You Knew You Could Get Away With It*	.29	.79	.67
II. Low Effort			
Willing to Settle for a Less than Optimum Grade	.44	.75	.54
III. Negative Activities			
Cheating On a Test If You Knew You Could Get Away With It*	.29	.75	.62
Damaging School Property If You Knew You Could Get Away With It*	.71	.14	.03
Stealing at School If You Knew You Could Get Away With It*	.13	.07	.06
B. Social Behavior			
I. Absence from School			
Having Unexcused Absences in the Last Four Weeks	.20	.22	.16
Skipping School If You Knew You Could Get Away With It	.42	.83	.66
II. Low Effort			
Willing to Settle for a Less than Optimum Grade	.36	.74	.57
III. Negative Activities			
Cheating on a Test If You Knew You Could Get Away With It	.38	.78	.62
Damaging School Property If You Knew You Could Get Away With It	.49	.09	.05
Stealing at School If You Knew You Could Get Away With It	.30	.09	.05

*These measures are similar in form to some of those used in the Safe School Study.

Table 4 - Relation of Presence of Incompatibility in the Evaluation System for Academic Work and Behavior to Six Measures of Disengagement in First Period Class

A. Academic Work Measures of Disengagement	Gamma	Proportion of Incompatible Systems Showing Disengagement	Proportion of Compatible Systems Showing Disengagement
I. Absence from School			
Cutting Class	.00	.20	.20
II. Low Effort			
Willing to Settle for a Less than Optimum Grade	.88	.71	.14
Non-Participation in Class	.41	.38	.21
Daydreaming in Class	.36	.52	.33
III. Negative Activities			
Disturbing Other Students	.41	.37	.20
Disturbing the Teacher and Disrupting the Class	.62	.46	.17
B. Social Behavior			
I. Absence from School			
Cutting Class	.48	.22	.14
II. Low Effort			
Willing to Settle for a Less than Optimum Grade	.49	.67	.36
Non-Participation in Class	.36	.41	.24
Daydreaming in Class	.63	.65	.30
III. Negative Activities			
Disturbing Other Students	.52	.46	.21
Disturbing the Teacher and Disrupting the Class	.42	.46	.27

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